



June 26, 2024

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear  
California State Senate  
1021 O Street, Room 7340  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 1053 – Solid waste: reusable grocery bags: standards: plastic film prohibition – SUPPORT  
(As Amended May 16, 2024)**

Dear Senator Blakespear,

On behalf of the City of Carlsbad, I write in strong support of Senate Bill (SB) 1053, which would address plastic waste in California by eliminating the option to receive a plastic film bag at grocery stores and retail grocers.

California was the first state in the nation to enact a single-use plastic bag ban. Initially successful in eliminating billions of flimsy, litter-prone, single-use grocery bags, recent observations and data show increased distribution and disposal of the exempt ‘thicker’ plastic bags, with little evidence that they are being reused for carryout purposes. According to a report, 157,385 tons of plastic bag waste was discarded in California the year the law was passed in 2014. By 2022, that number skyrocketed to 231,072 tons – a 47% increase! Even if we account for an increase in population, the number rose from 4.08 tons per 1,000 people in 2014 to 5.89 tons per 1,000 people in 2022 – still a 46% increase. What this data shows is that the original plastic bag ban passed in 2014 did not reduce the overall use of plastic and resulted in a substantial increase.

The average person in this nation uses one plastic bag a day. Globally, we use 5 trillion plastic bags a year. Most of those bags are used briefly, with an average lifespan of 12 minutes. Once discarded, plastic bags clog sewage drains, contaminate our drinking water and degenerate into toxic microplastics that fester in our oceans and landfills for up to 1,000 years.

This culture of careless plastic consumption has resulted in a tenfold increase in plastic pollution since 1980 and is responsible for the death of at least 100,000 marine mammals and 1 million seabirds each year. Some 18 billion pounds of plastic waste flows into the oceans every year from coastal regions alone. That’s the equivalent of five grocery bags of plastic trash sitting on every foot of coastline around the world.

Earlier this year, CalRecycle – pursuant to SB 343 (Allen, 2021) – published a list of products and materials that have demonstrated compliance with the State’s updated definition of “recyclable.” In this covered material categories list, all plastic film, including the polyethylene film used to make the high-density polyethylene (HDPE) bags, were determined to be “not recyclable” in the state of California. This designation means that the thick HDPE bags we commonly use today will ultimately be phased out, but the date is uncertain.

Although proponents of HDPE bags will claim they are easily recyclable in California, these bags need to go to specialty recycling facilities. According to a LA Times report, many municipal workers say plastic bags have to be

**City of Carlsbad City Council**

**City Hall 1200 Carlsbad Village Drive | Carlsbad, CA 92008 | 442-339-2820 t**

manually removed from the machinery at regular recycling centers and end up in a landfill. Moreover, the LA Times reached out to municipal and city recycling centers around the state and was unable to find a single one that accepts HDPE bags for recycling.

It is well past time to eliminate plastic film bags in the state of California. For these reasons, we are pleased to support SB 1053 and thank you for your leadership on this most important issue. Should you have any questions, please contact our legislative advocate Sharon Gonsalves with Renne Public Policy Group at 916-974-9270.

Sincerely,



Priya Bhat-Patel  
Mayor Pro Tem

CC: Members and Staff, Assembly Natural Resources Committee  
The Honorable Tasha Boerner, Assembly District 77  
Grant Mack, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Governor Gavin Newsom's Office of Legislative Affairs